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Short Subjects: Collecting at the 1982 World's Fair

Sally Ripatti

Dargan-Carver Library

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niques. It is also interesting to note that the word appraisal is not even mentioned in Schellenberg's Management of Archives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), a work that concentrates on arrangement and description.

²"No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records," American Archivist 44,2 (Spring 1981): 143-50.

COLLECTING AT THE 1982 WORLD'S FAIR

When the World's Fair came to Tennessee (1 May-31 October 1982), it brought an opportunity for the staff of the McClung Historical Collection of the Knoxville-Knox County Public Library to collect small, ephemeral fair-related items. There is a scarcity of such items from the city's early exposition experiences--the Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911 and the National Conservation Exposition twenty years later. This led to thoughts on the needs of future researchers and how easily similar requests might be met with relatively little effort in the present.

With our 1982 World's Fair collecting, we were working with a low-to-no budget, which certainly helped define our collecting policies. Fortunately, a good many ephemeral items were free. Our staff was alerted to look for anything with the World's Fair red flame logo. Good taste and discrimination were not factors--price was. We operated on the theory that unsuitable material, as well as duplicates, could be weeded and discarded at a later date.

There was an official everything for the fair, and we collected product containers and advertisements as much as possible. J.F.G. coffee bags, Flavor-Rich milk cartons, empty Coca-Cola cans, even Smoky Mountain Market hot dog wrappers all found

a home in our collection. I had a season pass to the fair and made it a point to pick up weekly schedules, brochures, and pamphlets from the pavilions. Once Lay's Three Little Pigs made the mistake of leaving their basket of self-portraits untended, and I took a handful of those—all for a good cause, of course. On the fair site I hung around garbage cans and watched the pavement for discarded tickets and other treasures. Several friends refused to go to the fair with me more than one time, claiming my bag-lady approach to collecting lacked dignity.

On a more cultural level, our library director Paul Bartolini, brought us programs from the entertainment events. Bill McArthur, the head of the McClung Collection, proudly brought in a menu from the Sunsphere Restaurant. We were also fortunate that State Senator Victor Ashe was generous in passing along the many lovely invitations to parties and special events he received.

One especially interesting donation was that of material received from the local Girl Scout Council. They had worked hard to coordinate camp-like accommodations for Girl Scouts from all over the United States, with the result of hosting 10,811 people. I am particularly pleased with the material because it represents a non-fair produced but Knoxville-related aspect of the fair. Margaret Dickson, the head of Lawson McGhee Library's children's department, was responsible for the donation which was followed by several post-fair deposits made by the Girl Scouts.

We contacted several local businesses for donations. The Coca-Cola Company sent over two of their commemorative trays, and the World's Fair shop at Miller's Department Store was very generous in donating a number of items we did not have, including t-shirts, ceramic souvenirs, and even a solar-powered hard hat.

I bought all of the different World's Fair postcards I could find. My special attention to postcards stemmed from the fact that those from Knoxville's earlier expositions make up the bulk of

our scanty material on the fairs and they have received heavy use from researchers. Knoxville benefitted from the 1982 fair's presence in that several excellent aerial photographs of the city were taken and reproduced on postcards. We have copies of those cards with our regular postcard collection as well as with the World's Fair material.

Postcard hunting emphasized the need to be ever vigilant in our search for material. One of the best postcards was located in a grocery store twenty-five miles away, and I never did find one like it in Knoxville. Likewise, the visitor center at the energy museum in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, had a number of World's Fair brochures which I never saw in Knoxville. The same held true for a stop at a North Carolina visitor center. It was frustrating to realize how much good material we were missing by either not knowing of its existence or not being where it was available.

We purchased small promotional items such as World's Fair drinking glasses available from Wendy's and McDonald's. Then, towards the close of the fair a lot of surplus souvenir items went on sale. One real find was a pair of deely bobbars (glittery shapes attached to a headband by long, loose springs) for fifty cents. In years to come researchers may speculate on the appeal of this apparel, but they certainly do represent a genuine aspect of the fair's ambience.

Another area of the fair's impact on Knoxville, one which many people would prefer to forget, involved the housing situation and evictions. One of my favorite artifacts, a t-shirt designed and donated by a genuine World's Fair evictee, shows a red, flame-shaped happy face clutching dollar bills in each hand and bears the words "Greed Comes to Knoxville."

There were several reasons we began our collecting. First was our awareness of the lack of extant materials from previous local expositions. Second, there was opportunity. The fair site was only a few blocks from the downtown library. Had it

been miles away, I am certain that our collection would have been much smaller. We hope the collection will be useful to researchers and helpful in putting together future exhibits on the fair. Our material is perfect for use in recreating a typical scene from the fair, perhaps showing visitors waiting in line to get into the Chinese Pavilion.

In January 1983 the McClung Collection took custody of the official 1982 World's Fair Collection, which consists of approximately one million pieces including slides, video tapes, documents (excluding legal and financial records), artifacts, and printed material. Most of what we collected was duplicated in the official collection. However, it was in mint condition, which was not always the case with the items we retrieved from underfoot on the fairgrounds.

At the time we began our collecting, we had requested to be chosen as the repository for the official World's Fair material, but no final decisions were reached until after the fair's closing. We could not assume we would be selected and do no collecting on our own, for that would have left us with very little or no record of the fair. Also, use restrictions have been placed on the official collection and access to that material is very limited. We have no such restrictions on the items we collected and have been able to help with requests that otherwise might have had to go unanswered for the six year restriction period.

As a post-fair footnote--the collecting continues. We have received several nice gifts from individuals in past months. Also, a dedicated McClung staff member is faithfully, systematically drinking his way through each color can of World's Fair beer--and bringing in the empties.

Sally Ripatti